

A Critical Analysis of Youth Unemployment: Its Effects on Community Peace and Security in Lira City

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.915EC0061>

Received: 04 June 2025; Accepted: 12 June 2025; Published: 21 July 2025

ABSTRACT

The study aimed at assessing the impact of youth unemployment on peace and security in Lira City, with specific objectives to investigate the effects of youth unemployment on social stability; examine the relationship between youth unemployment and capital offenses; determine the relationship between youth unemployment and minor offenses; and to propose the practical measures to reduce youth unemployment in Lira City. Although it adopted a descriptive design, the study mainly used a desk research method, and documentary reviews especially those given by relevant authorities such as the Uganda Police Force, and community departments of the two City Divisions, namely Lira City West and Lira City East from 2022 to 2024. The study findings reveal that youth unemployment negatively affects social stability mostly through acts of Gender Based Violence in Lira City East Division (52.9%), acts of prostitution in Lira Metropolitan Area (75.9), and Way-laying (59.9%) in Lira City West; that youth in Lira City West (65.1%) and Lira Metropolitan Areas (63.4%) were involved in acts of aggravated robberies but youth in Lira City East (64.9%) were involved in defilement; that of the 1,719 minor cases recorded in 2022-2024, Lira Metropolitan Areas Zone (36.2%) had more cases, than Lira City East Zone (33.6%) and Lira City West (30.2%); and that major cases in Lira City East and Lira Metropolitan Areas were simple robberies (60.8%) and 326 (52.3%), respectively, and theft cases from Lira City West (56.4%); and that skill trainings, change of attitudes by youth, and creation of job-network-platform can be effective in addressing youth unemployment. The study concludes that youth unemployment negatively affects social stability of homes and society at large; has a positive relationship with capital offenses especially aggravated robbery, but not with defilement and murder; has a positive relationship with minor offenses; and that youth unemployment in Lira City can be addressed through several interventions but not a single intervention. The study recommends that youth should be empowered through training on life skill-jobs; that special funds should be considered for the youth in Lira City; and that awareness creation for the youth through programmes such as patriotism campaigns should be scaled-up in Lira City. Further studies can be considered on the social and economic strategies to stop the recruitment of youth into rebel activities

Key words: Police, Peace, security, Youth, Unemployment, Lira City

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Unemployment and peace and security are major issues in the world today and youths have being categorized as main perpetrators of crimes in society Globally, it is estimated that unemployment affected about 67.6 million young people in 2019 (Harris & Seymour, 2021). While the global youth unemployment rate currently stands at 13.6%, the number varies drastically by region. According to Bisaso (2018), youth unemployment was highest in Northern Africa at an alarming rate of 30%.

As noted by Harris & Seymour (2021), the countries with the highest rates of youth unemployment are Gabon at 36%, Tunisia at 36.3%, French Polynesia at 36.9%, Botswana at 37.3%, N. Macedonia at 39.1%, Namibia at 39.5%, French Guiana at 39.6%, Bosnia at 39.7%, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines at 41.7%, and West Bank and Gaza at 42%. In the views of Uwonda et al (2017), such statistics appear to confirm that youth unemployment is not necessarily a local problem in Uganda but cuts across the globe.

In Sub-Sahara Africa, where there are nearly 200 million people between the ages of 15 and 24, the number of

unemployed persons is expected to double by 2045 (Romer, 2016). It is easy to see that skyrocketing youth unemployment rates will have a serious impact if not addressed. In Kenya, Zoega (2019) states that the high youth unemployment rate, just like any other country in the Sub-Sahara Africa can be attributed to the slow economic growth and small formal labour markets, high population growth rate, lack of sufficient experience and skills, lack of decent work, the rigid education system, rural-urban migration and limited social networks.

Youth in Uganda are the youngest population in the world, with 77% of its population being under 25 years of age. According to Bisaso (2019), there were about 7,310,386 youth from the ages of 15–24 years of age living in Uganda in 2018, with the unemployment rate for these young people standing at about 83%. A similar sentiment shared by the Uganda Demographics and Health Survey (2020) indicate that Uganda's national unemployment rate was 9.2%, while the unemployment rate for youth aged 18-30 was 13.3%. The youth unemployment rate refers to the share of the economically active population aged 15 to 24 currently without work but in search of employment (Quinney, 2015). In providing more information on youth unemployment in Uganda, the December 2021 report by Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBoS) indicated that youth unemployment rate for 2021 was 4.33%, a 0.33% increase from 2020; youth unemployment rate for 2020 was 4.00%, a 1.06% increase from 2019; youth unemployment rate for 2019 was 2.95%, a 0.04% increase from 2018; youth unemployment rate for 2018 was 2.90%, a 0.03% increase from 2017. This is shown in the table below:-

Table 1: Showing the Uganda's Youth Unemployment Rate - Historical Data

Year	% of Total Labor Force Ages 15-24	Annual Change
2020	4.00%	1.06%
2019	2.95%	0.04%
2018	2.90%	0.03%

Source: UBoS, 2024

The above table reveals that youth unemployment is real in Uganda. This has helped to explain that about 90.9% of young workers in Uganda are employed in the informal sector, with only 3.2% of youth working for waged employment, and 5.9% being self-employed. In the views of Harris & Seymour (2022), this poses a serious risk of more youth falling under different category of unemployment such as structural unemployment, frictional unemployment, and seasonal unemployment.

The concept of peace and security is hard to explain. Since it is not possible to know with precision the extent to which something is 'secure' and a measure of vulnerability is unavoidable, perceptions of peace and security vary, often greatly (Quinney, 2015). According to Marco (2011), peace and security is the state of being free from danger or threat in a society. Thus Rogers (2010) stated that national peace and security refers to the peace and security of a nation or state, including its people, economy, and institutions. Furthermore, Harris & Seymour (2022) believe that national peace and security can be breached under circumstance such as the continuous lack of basic goods as clean air, clean water, and sewage treatment for some, when others enjoyed them.

Youth unemployment has a negative effect on the individual and the family, but also on the broader community in the form of serious economic and social consequences. This includes economic welfare, production, and erosion of human capital, social exclusion, crime and social instability. According to Bisaso (2018), social instability is eminent in a society where there is high rate of unemployment. Social instability is when social justice is not in place, thus leading to the increase in social problems, while limiting social progress.

Crimes are committed by a certain social category of people with certain expectations living with the affluent class with no equal economic capacities. They find a way out for survival through criminalities. The

relationship between youth unemployment and national peace and security is a fundamental feature of the high burden and pressure to national resources (Bisaso, 2018). By implication, youth unemployment heightens inpeace and security with high likelihood of conflict as well as civil unrest which directly links to loss of foreign exchange by discouraging tourists and investors in a country or the region.

Whereas Kabayi et al (2017) concur that there has been significant increase in trade and other commercial activities in Uganda that are driven by markets availability, fertile soil and government support towards youth, there is still high rate of unemployment. This study shall thus be conducted to bridge this empirical research gaps.

Statement of the Problem

Although a survey conducted by UDHS (2022) has indicated high level of youth unemployment in Uganda, it is still unknown in terms of empirical research how this has impacted on national peace and security, and the field has attracted few studies. The UBoS Report (2024) indicates that the informal sector works accounted for about 85% of youth workers in Uganda, and that 3.2% of youths only work for wage employment, and 5.9% were self-employed, implying that over 90.9% of Ugandan youths are at risk of facing seasonal unemployment which in turn forces them into committing different crimes as an attempt to meet their basic needs. This is justified by the Uganda Police Crime Report (2024) which indicates that 76.1% of robbery cases recorded was perpetrated by suspects aged below 35; and that the same age category was active in cases such as theft, counterfeit products, impersonation, assault, rape, defilement, and burglary. This study therefore seeks to determine the impacts of youth unemployment on national peace and security in Lira City.

Objective of the Study

- i. To investigate the effects of youth unemployment on social stability in Lira City
- ii. To examine how youth unemployment relates to capital offenses in Lira City
- iii. To determine how youth unemployment relates to minor offenses in Lira City.
- iv. To propose the practical measures to reduce youth unemployment in Lira City

Research Questions

- i. What is the effect of youth unemployment on social stability in Lira City?
- ii. How does youth unemployment relate to capital offenses in Lira City?
- iii. How does youth unemployment relate to minor offenses in Lira City?
- iv. What are the practical measures to reduce youth unemployment in Lira City?

The Scope of the Study

Geographically, the study was undertaken in Lira City. Although the city is administratively sub-divided into West and East Divisions, this study considered the Uganda Police zoning which are: Lira City West Zone which covers mainly the former administrative units of Ojwina, Adyel and Lira sub-counties; Lira Metropolitan Areas Zone which covers mainly the former administrative units of Ngetta sub-county, Railways Division, Lira Central Division and Iwal sub-county; and Lira City East Zone which covers the former Adekokwok sub-county. In content, the study focused on investigating the effects of youth unemployment on social stability; the relationship between youth unemployment and capital offenses; and the relationship between youth unemployment and minor offenses in Lira City. The study was concluded in the month of November, 2024 with a consideration of period covering 2022 to 2024. The time scope is preferred because these areas witnessed significant increases in unemployment rates and crimes in Lira City.

The Significance of the Study

The study is to provide valuable information to governments and other policy makers to focus on youth employment, hence, making significant contribution to various attempts by government, non-governmental and other civil society organizations in finding lasting solutions to the problems facing the unemployed youth.

This study will also add to the lot of concerns being raised on youth unemployment, map out the unique nature of the problem as it pertains in the study area and arouse further answers to the discussion on this study theme.

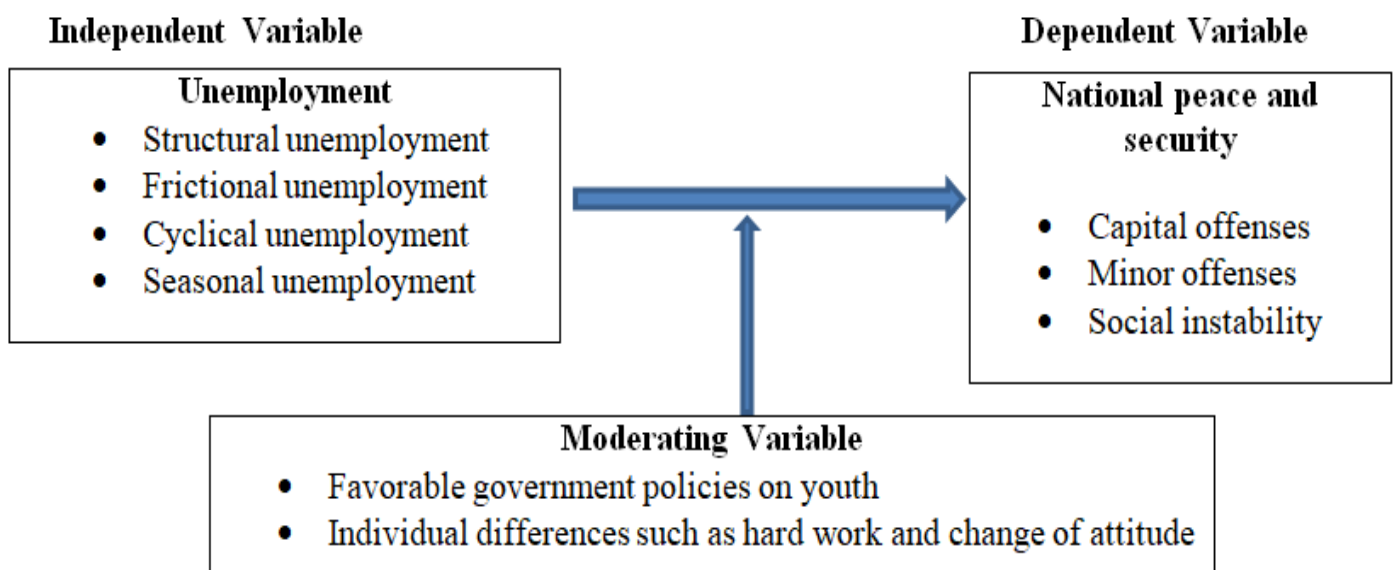
In addition, few studies have investigated the relationship between youth unemployment and national peace and security, thus the study findings may also be of great s significance to both academicians and general practitioners by providing a better insight into the understanding of the real effects of unemployment on peace and security issues in Uganda.

Furthermore, the findings will contribute to the debate on the impacts of youth unemployment on national peace and security and this will be one of the sources of literature since a copy of this dissertation will be displayed in the University library which can serve as reference point for future researchers in the field of livelihoods.

The Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework will illustrate what a researcher expects to find through conducting a study (Leshem & Trafford, 2007) and will therefore define the relevant variables for the study. This conceptual framework expresses Youth Unemployment as an independent variable and National Peace and security as a dependent variable. It shows how the two variables are linked to each other; and how the moderating variables are presumed to affect them.

Figure 1: Shows the structural explanation on the perceived impacts of youth unemployment and national peace and security



Source: Constructed by the Researcher (August, 2022)

Being categorized into structural, frictional, cyclical and seasonal forms, unemployment among youth is expected to cause direct effects on the peace and security of a society through the involvement youth in capital offenses, minor offenses, and acts of social instability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The information for this section was extracted from different books, articles, reports, journals and other useful academic information that were authored, published or presented. The purpose was to identify any research gap especially in regards to the impacts of youth unemployment on national peace and security.

Social instability has always been attributed to unemployment in society. A study conducted by Romer (2016) revealed that social disruptions often lead to five social symptoms: frustration, democratic disconnection, fragmentation, polarization, and escalation. Studies from the last decade show, that our societies have become

more fragmented and less coherent. A social instability is a problem that affects many people within a society. It is a group of common problems in present-day society and ones that many people strive to solve. It is often the consequence of factors extending beyond an individual's control. Social instability is the source of conflicting opinions on the grounds of what is perceived as morally correct or incorrect interpersonal social life decisions.

A study conducted by Barr et al (2018) reveals that unemployed youth is linked to social instability which is a direct result of social stratification and the differentiation of the members of society based on their occupation and income, wealth and social status, or social and political power. It determines the position of people within a social group, category, or geographic region. Similarly, in Kenya, Rogers (2010) conducted a study which reveals that youth unemployment was linked to the increase in the rate of abortion. The abortion debate was the ongoing controversy surrounding the moral, legal, and religious status of induced abortion.

Racism against various ethnic or minority groups in South Africa exist partly due to high rate of unemployment. According to Harris & Seymour (2022), in 2019, xenophobia was witnessed in South Africa due to high rate of youth unemployment in the country. South African youth in particular have faced restrictions on their political, social, and economic freedoms throughout much of 2019 and 2020.

The recruitment of youth into rebel ranks by insurgents such as the Allied Democratic Force or ADF in the Western region of Uganda could also point to the high rate of unemployment among young people in Uganda from 2006; at least 2,329 youths were reportedly recruited, trained and deployed to cause acts of terrorism across the country.

The Uganda Penal Code defines crime as any acts of grave consequence on society including properties, and humans. In 13th century English *crime* meant "sinfulness", and have signified bad acts such as 'charge', 'indictment', 'accusation', 'fault' or 'an offense'. Unemployment is associated with hate crimes are a social problem in the United States because they directly marginalize and target specific groups of people or specific communities based on their identities (Harris & Seymour, 2022). Hate crimes can be committed as the result of hate-motivated behavior, prejudice, and intolerance due to sexual orientation, gender expression, biological sex, ethnicity, race, religion, disability, or any other identity. Hate crimes are a growing issue especially in school settings because of the young populations that exist.

A study conducted in Jamaica by Bruce (2012) reveals that majority of victims and perpetrators of rape, defilement, and violent demonstration are teenagers and young adults which is the population that exists within educational institutions. These crimes can result to physical or sexual assault or harassment, verbal harassment, robbery, and death. Minor offenses are clearly stated in the Uganda Penal Code Act (2003) and include offenses such as burglary, assault, theft of goods that serve the purposes of basic needs, and drug misuse among others. In regions like Africa, young people make up more than one fifth of the population and 95% of their work is considered informal (Bakaoukas, 2020). By definition, this means any work which is without legal or social protections.

In practice, this typically means work that comes with low pay, erratic hours, uncertain employment status, and hazardous working conditions. In the first month of the COVID-19 crisis, it's been estimated that the income of informal workers like these dropped by 81% (Fredrickson, 2021). Without alternative sources of income, these young workers and their families will have no way to survive, hence resort to committing minor offenses in order to ensure that ends met.

Youth unemployment must be checked by any means available for implementation. The creation or establishment of job-network-platform can be one of several ways through which youth unemployment can be reduced (Baumeister, 2012). In Kenya, youth find both the informal and infrequent works through such a platform. After logging on to a job networking platform initiated by Mercy Corps and Google Inc., unemployed youth are connected to the clients and opportunities that have helped them in building a future for them (Garoupa & Klerman, 2020). The Google Impact Labs program, a global youth employment and innovation initiative launched by Mercy Corps and Google.org in Kenya.

The introduction of technical training for youth has been successful in many countries. In places like Addis Ababa, many young people run into barriers to employment they cannot escape (Kalifa, 2019). They cannot rise above the challenges of poverty and instability without opportunities in education or a good job and they cannot access opportunity without the income or safety to pursue it.

To be considered unemployed, one must be jobless, actively seeking work and available to take a job. So while there are approximately 41 million young people who make up the “potential labor force” in East African countries, not all of them are considered unemployed (Bisaso, 2018). Many are available for work but not actively seeking a job and often a result of discouragement. Establishment of a market systems approach, where root causes of youth unemployment is addressed rather than addressing its symptoms. By building up the ecosystems around youth work, it is ensured that the programs have a lasting effect even long after they have ended.

Building resilience and creation of cohesion among youth will ensure youth are empowered. A research conducted by Kalifa (2019) reveals that youth employment programming is often most effective when layered with other holistic interventions such as mentoring and transferable skills. That’s why we include life skills training in our programs as well as sector-specific skills training. Together, these skills help build job seekers’ resilience to unpredictable job markets, allowing them to not only secure and retain a job, but cope with changes in an evolving working environment.

Conclusively, the literatures have fallen short of addressing the direct effects of youth unemployment on national peace and security in Uganda. Apparently, there is limited empirical research on the impacts of youth unemployment on national peace and security. Perhaps this could be due to the fact that issues of national peace and security had not been associated with youth unemployment and has not attracted adequate attention in terms of empirical research. It is thus this gap in literatures that the study seeks to bridge through conducting this study.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Although the study adopted a descriptive design to investigate the research problem, desk research method and documentary reviews was considered. The descriptive design was preferred because it offers an opportunity to integrate the qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection with the aim of systematically describing a phenomenon, situation, or a population (Siedlecki, 2020).

Study Population

The study population comprised of youth or persons aged between 18 and 30 in Uganda, and the target population for the study was unemployed youth in Lira City. The choice of this category of population for this study is preferred because it is the unit from which the findings of this study are meant to be generalized

Data Collection

Documentary reviews and Review of secondary data was used as instruments from which data was generated from government sources such as the District Labour Officers, Uganda Police Force, the Judiciary, the Uganda People’s Defense Forces, the Uganda Wildlife Authority, and the Uganda Prisons Service. Other reports were found from the UBoS; the World Bank and UNICEF; and from published books, reputable journals or other academic documents that also provided or facilitated the generation of information and data requirements for this study.

STUDY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Prevalence of Youth Unemployment

Views on the prevalence of youth unemployment were sought from the City Labour Officer Lira City from

which four scaled-grading was preferred, namely: Low (0-25%); Moderate (26-50); High (51-75%); Very High (76-100%). The responses are summarized in table 2 below:-

Table2: Showing the prevalence of youth unemployment in Lira City.

Unemployment	Lira City East	Lira City Centre	Lira City West
Structural	Low	High	High
Frictional	Moderate	Low	High
Cyclical	Low	Low	High
Seasonal	High	High	Very High

Source: Data from the City Labour Officers (Lira City Council, 2024)

The findings in table 2 above indicate that youth unemployment is high in Lira City West, than in Lira City East and Lira Metropolitan Areas. This finding is in line with the writing by Uwonda et al (2017) who contend that globally, youth are facing the problem of unemployment which are both voluntary and involuntary and can be broken down into frictional unemployment, cyclical unemployment, structural unemployment, and institutional unemployment. The high rate of youth unemployment in Lira City West could be explained by its location disadvantage which makes most youth to prefer living in slum life to education and training in relevant life changing skills.

Table 3: Showing gender spread and different offenses (2022-2024)

<i>City</i>	<i>Constructs</i>	<i>Male N (%)</i>		<i>Female N (%)</i>		<i>Total N (%)</i>	
Lira City East	Social Instability	168	(68.9%)	76	(31.1%)	244	(100%)
	Capital Offenses	36	(97.3%)	1	(2.7%)	37	(100%)
	Minor Offenses	514	(89.1%)	63	(10.9%)	577	(100%)
Lira Metropolitan Areas	Social Stability	171	(84.2%)	32	(15.8%)	203	(100%)
	Capital Offenses	39	(95.1%)	2	(2.9%)	41	(100%)
	Minor Offenses	498	(79.9%)	125	(20.1%)	623	(100%)
Lira City West	Social Stability	211	(65.7%)	110	(34.3%)	321	(100%)
	Capital Offenses	53	(80.3%)	13	(19.7%)	66	(100%)
	Minor Offenses	433	(83.4%)	86	(16.6%)	519	(100%)

Source: The Uganda Police Spokespersons (North Kioga Regions, 2024).

The findings in table 3 above reveal that more male than female youth are always involved in acts that negatively affect the national peace and security. In Lira City East, 97.3%, 89.1% and 68.9% of male youth committed capital offenses, minor offenses and acts of social instability compared to 2.7%, 10.9% and 31.1% of female youth who committed the same offenses. In Lira Metropolitan Areas, 95.1%, 84.2%, and 79.9% of male youth committed capital offenses, acts of social instability and minor offenses, respectively but female youth were comparatively low at 2.9%, 15.8% and 20.1% for the same offenses. In Lira City West, 83.4%,

80.3% and 65.7% of male youth committed minor offenses, capital offenses and acts of social instability, compared to 16.6%, 19.7%, and 34.3% of female youth who committed the same offenses.

These findings corroborate a study conducted in Jamaica by Bruce (2012) who revealed that majority of victims and perpetrators of rape, defilement, and violent demonstration are teenagers; and young adults which is the population that exists within any society. These crimes can result to physical or sexual assault or harassment, verbal harassment, robbery, and death.

Although the NPHC Report (2014) indicate that there was more female than male in Uganda, the Uganda Police crime statistics referred above tend to suggest that male youth were committing more crimes than female. This could be due to girl-child education campaigns which are currently being undertaken by both the Government of Uganda, and different stakeholders in education management.

Effects of Youth Unemployment on Social Stability in Lira City

In this study objective, youth unemployment was considered at the aspects of structural unemployment, frictional unemployment, cyclical unemployment, and seasonal unemployment; and its effects were looked at the aspects of acts of demonstrations; Gender Based Violence; parentless children and street kids; acts of hooliganism in the cities; Way-laying; drugs and other substance abuse; prostitution; and trans-generational relationship. The findings are presented as shown below:-

Table 4: Showing the percentage of youth involved in acts of social instability in (2022-2024)

Common offenses committed	Lira City East (N=244)		Lira Metropolitan Areas (N=203)		Lira City West (N=321)	
Acts of demonstrations	0	-	2	0.9%	14	4.4%
GBV & Family conflicts	129	52.9%	24	11.9%	55	17.1%
Parentless children and street kids	9	3.7%	1	0.5%	6	1.9%
Acts of hooliganism in the cities	13	5.3%	3	1.5%	9	2.8%
Way-laying	6	2.5%	14	6.9%	192	59.8%
Drug and substance abuse	10	4.1%	2	0.9%	31	9.6%
Prostitution	76	31.1%	154	75.9%	6	1.9%
Trans-generational relationship	1	0.4%	3	1.5%	8	2.5%
TOTAL	244	100%	203	100%	321	100%

Source: The Uganda Police Spokespersons (North Kioga Regions, 2024).

Youth unemployment tend to affect family life more in Lira City East where 52.9% of youth were involved in acts of GBV and family conflicts either with the parents, or other relatives; and 31.1% involved in acts of prostitution. These findings are in compliance with a study conducted by Romer (2016) which revealed that social disruptions often lead to five social symptoms: frustration, democratic disconnection, fragmentation, polarization, and escalation.

In Lira Metropolitan Areas, 75.9% of youth were involved in acts of prostitution, which is in line with a study conducted in Kenya by Rogers (2010) which reveals that youth unemployment was linked to the increase in

the rate of abortion.

In Lira City West, more youth were involved in Way-laying (59.8%). The study findings in Lira and Lira Metropolitan Areas cities could be explained by loss of hope especially after a youth drops out of school or fails to accomplish and education target, hence, ending-up staying at home, worse still without work. In Lira City West, Way-laying could be justified by drugs and other substances. According to Harris & Seymour (2022), abuse of alcohol and drugs is always common in these neighborhoods, hence, a threat to the peace and security of society.

The relationship between youth unemployment and capital offenses in Lira City

In this study objective, youth unemployment was considered at the aspects of structural unemployment, frictional unemployment, cyclical unemployment, and seasonal unemployment; and its relationship with capital offences such as murder or manslaughter, rape, defilement, aggravated robbery, and acts of treason. The findings are presented as shown below:-

Table 5: Showing the percentage of youth involved in capital offenses in (2022-2024)

Common offenses committed	Lira City East (N=37)		Lira Metropolitan Areas (N=41)		Lira City West (N=66)	
Murder or manslaughter	1	2.7%	4	9.7%	4	6.1%
Rape	7	18.9%	2	4.8%	1	1.5%
Defilement	24	64.9%	7	17.1%	13	19.7%
Aggravated Robbery	5	13.5%	26	63.4%	43	65.1%
Illegal possession of guns & treason	0	-	2	4.8%	5	7.6%
TOTAL	37	100%	41	100%	66	100%

Source: The Uganda Police Spokesperson (North Kioga Region, 2024).

The findings reveal that a total of 144 capital offenses in the three cities of Lira, Lira Metropolitan Areas and Lira City West were recorded in 2023/2024. The statistics appear to suggest a relatively low disparity in the number of cases recorded, Lira City West recorded more cases at 66 (45.8%), followed by Lira Metropolitan Areas at 41 cases (28.5%), and Lira City East with 37 cases (25.7%). These findings are in compliance with the literatures of Harris & Seymour (2022) who opined that such perpetrators have a high drop-out rate from school, and high involvement in abuse of alcohol and drugs. In this context it is assumed that the selected offenses could only be committed by persons without any forms of gainful employment, hence, youth who committed such offenses were considered to be out of any gainful employment at the time of arrest.

In regards to specific Cities, the secondary data reveals that youth in Lira City West recorded 65.1% in aggravated robbery, and 1.5% in rape; Lira Metropolitan Areas 63.4% in aggravated robbery, and 4.8% in both rape cases and cases of illegal possession of firearms; and Lira City East had 64.9% for defilement, and 2.7% for murder or manslaughter.

The findings from the three cities imply that defilement (64.9%), which was a major capital offense committed by youth in Lira City East is not significantly related to youth unemployment but a behavioral problem or moral degeneration. The findings from both Lira City West and Lira Metropolitan Areas imply that aggravated robbery which stood at 65.1% and 63.4%, respectively could have been committed by the unemployed youth who wanted ends to be met.

The relationship between youth unemployment and minor offenses in Lira City

In this study objective, youth unemployment was considered at the aspects of structural unemployment, frictional unemployment, cyclical unemployment, and seasonal unemployment; and its effects were looked at the aspects minor offences. The findings are presented as shown below:-

Table 6: Showing the percentage of youth involved in Minor Offenses in (2022-2024)

Common offenses committed	Lira City East (N=577)		Lira Metropolitan Areas (N=623)		Lira City West (N=519)	
Theft	165	28.6%	249	40.0%	293	56.4%
Burglary	35	6.1%	13	2.1%	9	1.7%
Simple Robbery	351	60.8%	326	52.3%	198	38.2%
Conman ships	12	2.1%	5	0.8%	2	0.4%
Dealing in Counterfeit money & goods	1	0.2%	8	1.3%	6	1.2%
Others	13	2.2%	22	3.5%	11	2.1%
TOTAL	577	100%	623	100%	519	100%

Source: The Uganda Police Spokespersons (North Kioga Region, 2024).

The findings reveal that a total of 1,719 minor offenses involved youths. Although the statistics appear to suggest a relatively equal number of cases recorded, Lira Metropolitan Areas City recorded more cases at 623 (36.2%), followed by Lira City East at 577 cases (33.6%) and Lira City West with 519 cases (30.2%). The Uganda Penal Code Act (2003) corroborates the above finding by spelling out offenses such as burglary, assault, theft of goods that serve the purposes of basic needs, and drug misuse among others. The selected offenses could only be committed by persons without any forms of gainful employment, hence, youth who committed such offenses were considered to be out of any gainful employment at the time of arrest.

In regards to specific Cities, the secondary data reveals that youth in Lira City and Lira Metropolitan Areas City were involved in simple robbery at 351 cases (60.8%), and 326 (52.3%) of all cases recorded in both cities, but youth in Lira City West committed more theft at 293 cases (56.4%) of all cases reported in the city. This period in question or 2022 was characterized by strict lockdown following the outbreak of COVID 19 pandemic. In the first month of the COVID-19 crisis, it was estimated that the income of informal workers like the seasonal youth had to drop by 81% (Fredrickson, 2021), hence, without alternative sources of income, these young workers and their families will have no way to survive, hence resort to committing minor offenses in order to ensure that ends met.

The proposed practical measures to reduce youth unemployment in Lira City

The introduction of technical, vocational, and life-changing course training for in Lira City is one of the ways of combating youth unemployment. Such trainings have been successful in many countries as written by Kalifa (2019) who cited places like Addis Ababa, where many young people run into barriers to employment due to inadequate skills needed but were rescued after undergoing hands-on-skill-training.

Advocating for change of attitude towards work would ensure that youth in Lira City are employed into agriculture, services, and technical works without necessarily looking for white-collar jobs. Aben et al (2018) contend that Lira City is blessed with fertile soil and favorable climate for both crop cultivation and animal raring. Against this backdrop, the youth would harness this opportunity to be gainfully employed in

agriculture, regardless of their education background.

The creation or establishment of job-network-platform by the telecommunication service providers such as MTN, Airtel and the Uganda Telecom Limited would enhance the capacity of youths in Lira City to be connected with the prospective and available jobs owners. For instance, Garoupa & Klerman (2020) write that in Kenya, youth find both the informal and infrequent works through such a platform. After logging on to a job networking platform initiated by Mercy Corps and Google Inc., unemployed youth on Kenya are connected to the clients and opportunities that have helped them in building a future for them through the Google Impact Labs program, a global youth employment and innovation initiative launched by Mercy Corps and Google.org in Kenya.

Dissemination of information in regards to availability of jobs is paramount in curbing youth unemployment in Lira City. To be considered unemployed, one must be jobless, actively seeking work and available to take a job, and so while there are approximately 41 million young people who make up the “potential labor force” in East African countries, not all of them are considered unemployed (Bisaso, 2018). Many are available for work but not actively seeking a job and often a result of discouragement.

Building resilience and creation of cohesion among youth will ensure youth are empowered. A research conducted by Kalifa (2019) reveals that youth employment programming is often most effective when layered with other holistic interventions such as mentoring and transferable skills. That is why we include life skills training in our programs as well as sector-specific skills training. Together, these skills help build job seekers’ resilience to unpredictable job markets, allowing them to not only secure and retain a job, but cope with changes in an evolving working environment.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

The first objective was to examine the effects of youth unemployment on social stability and the finding reveal that it negatively affects family life more in Lira City East where 52.9% of youth were involved in acts of GBV and family conflicts; 75.9% of youth were involved in acts of prostitution in Lira Metropolitan Areas; and in Lira City West, 59.8% of the youth were involved in Way-laying. The study concludes that youth unemployment negatively affects social stability of homes and society at large.

The second objective was to determine the relationship between youth unemployment and capital offenses and the finding reveal that youth in Lira City West recorded 65.1% in aggravated robbery; Lira Metropolitan Areas 63.4% were involved in aggravated robbery; and Lira City East had 64.9% for defilement. The study concludes that youth unemployment has a positive relationship with capital offenses such as aggravated robbery, but not murder and defilement in Lira City

The third objective was to assess the relationship between youth unemployment and minor offenses in Lira City and the finding reveal that Lira Metropolitan Areas recorded more cases at 623 (36.2%); Lira City East at 577 cases (33.6%); and Lira City West with 519 cases (30.2%), with major cases in Lira City and Lira Metropolitan Areas City being simple robberies at 351 cases (60.8%) and 326 (52.3%), respectively, of all cases recorded in both cities; and youth in Lira City West recorded more theft cases at 293 (56.4%) of all cases reported in the city. The study concludes that youth unemployment has a positive relationship with minor offenses in Lira City.

The fourth objective was aimed at suggesting the practical measures to reduce youth unemployment in Lira City and the finding reveal that skill trainings, change of attitudes by youth, and creation of job-network-platform can be effective in addressing youth unemployment. The study concludes that youth unemployment in Lira City can be addressed through several interventions but not a single intervention.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

- a) Since youth unemployment negatively affects social stability of homes and society at large, the study recommends that youth should be empowered through training on life skill-jobs

- b) Since the study finding reveals a positively relationship between youth unemployment and aggravated robbery, possibly in search of money and other valuable commodities, special funds should be considered for the youth in Lira City as an attempt to avert this trend.
- c) Awareness creation for the youth such as patriotism campaigns should be scaled-up in Lira City as an attempt to instill the culture of hard work and love for the country because the study reveals that youth unemployment has a positive relationship with minor.
- d) All the stakeholders dealing with youth welfare in Lira City should emphasize on multiple interventions such as the creation of job-network-platforms to address the problem of youth unemployment.

Areas of further Study

- i. Social strategies to re-engage the youth into productive activities
- ii. Social strategies to stop the recruitment of youth into evil practices

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